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INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 4576
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 4830
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 9946
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 2817
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 001816

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/11/2016

TAGS: PGOV PTER NP

SUBJECT: CALL FOR HOME MINISTER'S RESIGNATION BY HIS OWN
PARTY

REF: KATHMANDU 1576

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Nicholas Dean. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Nepali Congress MPs Losing Faith In Sitaula

¶1. (C) Media reports indicated that on July 10, Nepali Congress (NC) Members of Parliament demanded the resignation of Krishna Sitaula, Home Minister and Chief of the Government of Nepal's (GON) negotiation team with the Maoists. The demand came during a meeting of the NC parliamentary committee. NC MPs faulted Sitaula for ramming through the eight-point agreement between the GON and the Maoists without consultation with the Party. Chakra Prasad Bastola, NC MP, excoriated GON talks team and Sitaula for failing to consult with the Party before signing the eight-point agreement. Govinda Raj Joshi, another NC MP, agreed with Bastola and added that NC MPs were "furious" with Sitaula because he did not discuss the developments with the Party.

¶2. (C) Pushkar Ojha, NC MP, declared that Sitaula's negotiations leading to the eight-point agreement "...forced us to raise the question whether Sitaula is representing the state during the talks or has already surrendered to the Maoists." Romi Gauchan Thakali, NC MP, told Emboff July 11 that the NC parliamentary committee wanted Sitaula to resign as soon as possible from at least one of his positions. Thakali did not think that Sitaula would actually resign. Thakali expressed concern that "the PM places too much trust in those closest to him and is allowing Sitaula to make all his decisions" regarding the peace process.

Need To Amend Eight-Point Agreement

¶3. (C) NC Parliamentarians are also demanding that the eight-point agreement signed between the GON and the Maoists (reftel) be amended to prevent dissolution of Parliament until the Maoists give up their weapons. Bastola told us that the Maoists cannot be allowed to enter an interim government until their weapons are managed. Thakali told us that the NC MPs would come out with a resolution on July 11 or 12 stressing the need to change the eight-point agreement to maintain Parliament until the Maoists give up their weapons. (Note: Thakali suggested that if changes were not made soon to include the Parties in decisions, he and other

MPs might "threaten" to ask the PM to resign, although he acknowledged the difficulty in making such a statement within his own party. End Note.)

Comment

¶4. (C) This is the first time since the restoration of Parliament that Members of Parliament have called for the resignation of a minister from the government. It is especially significant evidence of dissention because it comes from within the Home Minister's own party. Distrust of Sitaula is growing because members of the political parties feel left out of the peace and negotiation process and are frustrated that agreements are being made without their consultation. This split of opinion in the Prime Minister's own party reflects the lack of consensus within the Nepali Congress on the way ahead. We continue to stress the need for unity among the Seven Party Alliance with Nepal's political leaders as they map out the difficult transition to democracy.

DEAN